Perky Psychos

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Perky Psychos

by FujinoLover

Summary

Two numbers come up in Rome, Root and Shaw to the rescue.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes

Villanelle takes another second, just staring at Eve's unmoving body, then she turns on her heel and walks away. She only passed through the archway when someone intercepts her. A woman about her height, older, pretty. She comes from the side and enters her line of vision, only stopping at an arm length away. The woman smiles. Not quite a full curly hair, but it looks so soft. Villanelle smiles back, maybe she still can have some fun tonight.

"Hi, sorry to bother you like this," the woman says. Her voice is as pleasant as her looks. American accent, can't quite pinpoint the exact origin. Probably a tourist. "I'm kinda lost." She must be the cause of those damn birds flapping away earlier. "Do you speak English?" She tilts her head to the side a bit.

Villanelle would have fallen for all the charm if not for the woman's eyes flickering to something far over her shoulder. *Eve*. Taking a step back, she raises the gun whilst keeping an eye on Eve. There is another person—another woman, judging from the long ponytail—by Eve's side. Villanelle grits her teeth, no one should touch what is hers.

"Who—"

"Cute gun," the first woman says.

Grabbing Villanelle's outstretched arm by the wrist, she tugs her forward. The crackling prongs of a stun gun touch her on the shoulder and stay there for over three seconds, overloading her nerves with electrical pulses. She collapses to the ground, shaking with the aftershock. Her limbs are trembling and useless. The woman crouches next to her, taking out a syringe from her jacket pocket and Villanelle is disappointed that it's not a dagger.

"Sorry about this." And then she jabs the needle into her neck, cold sedative pumping through her blood.

The last thing Villanelle sees before her eyes roll to the back of her head is Eve; the other woman's hands pressing on her wound. Of course Eve isn't dead; she never aims to kill her in the first place.

Villanelle wakes up to the noise of nearby construction and passing train, and to the smell of coffee and sweet pancakes. Bright light assaults her the moment she opens her eyes. Who is dumb enough to have six windows in a row without proper blinds? Groaning to herself, she rolls to the side and almost falls off the firm mattress—orthopedic mattress, she bets. It feels like sleeping on the floor.

After another second of sulking, she sits up, kicking the purple comforter off and swinging her legs over the edge of the bed. She idly notes the dark blue pajamas she has on, cotton instead of satin like the one Aaron got for Billie. It won't be the first time she wakes up in a

strange place, doesn't seem to be the last either, so she just takes it in strides. At least she's not having an annoying headache after being drugged.

The woman who drugged her is in the kitchen. There is a small dining table separating it and the bed, otherwise it's just a vast open space. Whoever owns the place really doesn't give a single fuck about décor or furnishings and the blue lava lamp on the nightstand is so lame. The knife next to the fruit bowl on the table catches her immediate attention. She snatches it off, eyes flickering between the blade and the woman who hasn't realized her very-awake presence just yet.

A growl to her left stops her.

"Bear," the woman says, still not turning back from whatever she's cooking on the stove. "*Afliggen*."

Dutch, Villanelle notes. The Belgian malinois sits back down on his bed. "*Goede jongen*," she says, grinning when his tail wags at the compliment. "*Kom hier*." He looks at the woman then at Villanelle and stays where he is. She pouts.

"He takes a while to warm up to new people." The woman turns then, bringing a plate of pancakes to the table. "Sleep well?"

"Who are you?"

"You can call me Root."

Villanelle scoffs. "What kind of name is that?"

"What kind of name is Villanelle?"

"A good one!"

Root merely raises her brows, the smile ever present on her lips.

"You are so annoying." Villanelle glares at her. Her grip on the knife tightens. The last time she met a woman this annoying, she suffocated her to death with a plastic bag. "What do you want from me?"

"Breakfast?" Root pushes the plate over to Villanelle. The condensed milk crisscrossing with honey on top of the stack of folded pancakes. "You can keep the knife if it makes you feel better," she says before she goes to make more pancakes.

Villanelle slams said knife on the table, rattling the fruit bowl and the tablet on it. She drags out a chair with more force than necessary, its legs scratch loud against the floor, and she sits down with a huff. The chair beside her is occupied with a toddler-size black plushie with an angry face, kind of reminds her of Julian and his doll collection. It's getting creepy. Root was saying all the right things, as if she'd been watching her all along. Like Aaron, but a lot prettier.

Root comes back with a glass of warm tea for Villanelle—just like the breakfast she used to have on cold Sunday mornings back in Russia when her mother was alive. “Go ahead.” She motions at the pancakes. “We’ll join you in a minute.”

After another second of staring and a prompting growl from her stomach, Villanelle gives in. She hums over the first mouthful of pancakes, there are bits of bananas and chocolate chips in it—it’s amazing. She’s halfway to finish the stack when the door to the apartment opens and she reaches for the knife again. The woman who was at Eve’s side back in Rome walks in, glancing at her once as she takes off her jacket.

“Hi, honey,” the woman says.

Villanelle expects Root to answer the overly affectionate greeting, but she remains busy with the pancakes and it’s not even addressed to her in the first place. Bear gets up from his bed, rushing to greet the woman back with a series of licks. After giving all the affection he deserves, the woman moves to the kitchen to take a plate of pancakes from Root. She mutters a low *thanks*, fingertips grazing Root’s hip for a fleeting moment and then she goes to sit across the plushie that oddly resembles her angry face. After a moment, Root joins them with a cup of coffee, hand squeezing the woman’s shoulder before she takes the last available chair next to her.

Villanelle watches them as she continued eating. The touching, the lingering stare from Root, the undeniable sense of their movement around each other is a dance they have been doing for a while—it’s not hard to figure out that they are together. She smirks. She always has a thing for brunettes, but is it too early to propose a threesome?

She asks anyway.

Root remains smiling while her partner shakes her head a little, but they roll their eyes at her, in sync, as if they shared one working brain cell. It’s freaking creepy. Villanelle inspires to be that level of creepy with Eve.

“IDs, cash, and phone.” Root puts each item on the table, pulling them out from The Machine-knows-where. “You can take the car or motorcycle downstairs, or I can give you a MetroCard.”

Villanelle makes a face. The mention of MetroCard confirms her of her current whereabouts —Billie’s hometown. There is no chance in hell she will be willingly travelled in New York City on foot, or any other mode of transportation if she could help it. The loud noises, way too many people, thick traffic, and the really really *really* annoying accent, she’d rather shoot herself dead first.

Unfortunately for her, she has nowhere else to go and nothing to do. The Twelve wants her dead, even more after Raymond. MI6 still wants her captured, even after Carolyn threw her under the bus. Without Konstantin, she has no suitable connection to find a proper job—she really doesn’t know how to do any other job that doesn’t involve killing people. And the only person she has left is Eve.

“I’m not going anywhere without Eve,” Villanelle says. It seems to be something Root expects all along, because her annoying smile just gets wider. Villanelle wants to carve it up to her ears. “Where is she?”

“Recovering.”

Villanelle doesn’t like the vague answer at all. “Where?”

“Why?” Root asks back, although she takes the tablet from the table and brings it to life with a press of her finger. “Are you going to apologize to her?”

“No.” Villanelle huffs, arms cross over her chest in childish petulance. “She broke my heart.”

Root shows her the live footage playing on the tablet anyway. Eve is lying on a hospital bed, her amazing hair splays out over the white pillowcase. There is an IV line hooks onto her arm, but other than that, the machineries surrounding her bed are dormant. Villanelle can only make out limited items in the background, but she can tell that Eve is not in an actual hospital.

“Shaw, do you mind if I take the next relevant number?” Root asks her partner, using her name for Villanelle’s sake after her apparent disregard of introducing herself.

Shaw answers between bites, “No.”

“Thank you.” There is an unnecessary touch on Shaw’s forearm and Villanelle almost gags. “Would you like to go with me on a trip?” Root asks Villanelle next.

It is intriguing enough for Villanelle to follow Root to the kitchen, bringing her empty plate and glass to the sink. “Where to?”

Root opens the refrigerator then. There are different kind of guns inside, rows of bullets behind the gallon of milk, sniper rifles hanging on one door and grenades lining the other door along with eggs. Americans and their love for guns, Villanelle almost drools.

Root takes out several handguns, laying them on the counter next to the fridge. “No headshot or center mass.” She hesitates. “Can you do that?”

Villanelle gasps, offended. She hates being doubted of her skills. “Of course I can!”

The loud exclamation pulls a smile on Root’s face and Villanelle can’t help but think that she’s being played all along. “We’ve got a relevant number in Alaska,” Root says, like it’s going to be fun. “We’re gonna steal a jet.”

Whatever little excitement Villanelle has is switched off when she hears the destination. She was supposed to go to Alaska with Eve, get a cabin, and eat spaghetti for dinner. They would be normal. Instead, Eve turned her down—rejected her and her own true nature.

Noticing the sudden change and knowing the exact reason, Root holds Villanelle’s arm and steers her to the counter. “Grab some guns. You’ll feel better once we shoot some people.” She gives a knowing wink at Shaw from across the room.

For the second night in a row, Eve stirs awake to the smell of takeouts and Shaw cleaning her gun. She doesn't bother to conceal her disappointment, letting out a long suffering sigh. Shaw saved her life and is a reliable, efficient doctor. Eve is not trying to be an ungrateful little bitch, but Shaw's bedside manner leaves a lot to be desired.

"It's Chinese."

Eve can tell from the smell. Her stomach pinches with hunger, but she's not really in the mood to eat. Sleeping and eating are all she's been doing since she got shot. Other than the daily walking exercise around the apartment and her constant thought of Villanelle, it's getting boring. Instead of the food, she motions at the gun on Shaw's hands.

"How many guns do you actually have to clean?"

"A lot." The underlying sarcasm in the question doesn't bother Shaw at all. "But these aren't mine. They are Root's."

"And where is she?"

Eve hates how needy she sounded, but it's been a couple of days since she last saw Root. It's not that she doesn't like Shaw. Being with her actually brings back the sense of safety she hasn't felt in a while, but her presence is a quiet one indeed. Eve has to carry the conversation, most of the time she doesn't have the energy to, so they eat and remain quiet until she falls asleep again.

With Root, however, the conversation flows. The first time Root came in is after a mission and she was dressed as someone else. Sara Cook, an auburn-haired UN translator who speaks fluent Japanese. She brought food Eve loves, Indian takeouts with extra lime pickle. They let a silly romance movie playing in the background as they ate. Eve enjoyed the tale of Root's mission and the people she got to shoot that day. She listened to her bragging about how she outsmarted everyone and never asks for confirmation whether by shooting Root means killing or just something less lethal like kneecapping, she doesn't want to complicate her already messed up moral compass.

Eve doesn't dare to say it out loud, but Root reminds her of Villanelle, *a lot*.

"She went with Villanelle to Alaska." Shaw pauses to take off the slide of the Glock 26. "On a mission."

Eve gapes, mind racing to process the new information. Villanelle is *here*? Root and Shaw brought her too? And she went with Root to Alaska—*their* Alaska?

"You did that on purpose," Eve says instead.

"Did what?"

“That dramatic pause.”

Shaw rolls her eyes at the accusation. Putting down the stripped parts of the gun, she reaches for another tucked on her waistband and presents it to Eve. It’s the SIG Sauer P238 that Villanelle used to shoot her, but she never sees it up-close so she doesn’t recognize it. She only knows that the tiny gun reminds her of the one Villanelle had.

“I don’t know what to do with that.”

“I can teach you.”

Eve laughs, uneasy. “Why would I...“ Eyes widen, she backs away as far as the pillows allow her, as though their softness provides some kind of protection. “Oh my God! Am I in danger? Is The Twelve here? Is that why—“

“No.” Eve seems to get more erratic with each question, so Shaw puts a quick plug on that before it turns hysterical. She doesn’t want to waste a dose of sedative on this. “Root will bring Villanelle here when they’re done with the mission.”

There is relief, all for a whole glorious second before the implication becomes too real.

A through-and-through gunshot wound. Kehr’s sign. Incision made on exit wound for assessment. The .380 ACP bullet nicked the splenic capsule. Ruptured spleen. Hemodinamically stable. Low grade injury only required conservative management, as in suture, antibiotics, and observation with frequent ultrasound examination. Good prognosis.

When Eve woke up the first time, ribs thick with bandages and still groggy from the morphine, Shaw listed them off like she was talking about groceries—hell, Eve is sure Shaw will have more excitement talking about food than the chore of saving her life.

Eve can’t make the connection of what Shaw said with her own memories. The force hit her side, strong enough to send her sprawling on the ground. She was too in shock to make a sound. The dirt got in her mouth. The ground was stone-cold and damp against her cheek. The burning sensation in her gut sharpening with each ragged breath. The warm wetness of blood soaking her clothes was the worst part of it all.

She lay there, listening to Villanelle’s steps getting fainter along with her own heartbeats. She was resigned to her fate, to die alone and be forgotten like the ruins surrounding her, just before the sight of a pair of black boots and its wearer pulled her back to the moment. She made some noise then, but her voice failed her. It didn’t come back, not even as steady hand pressed a cloth on her bleeding wound and she was turned to her back and a sharp pain made itself known on her left shoulder. She stared up at Shaw’s blank expression. Totally focused yet almost entirely inaccessible—just like Villanelle’s. Eve finally let out a mix of scream and a laugh when Shaw widened the wound under her ribs with a black folding knife and peered at the damage inside. Then she blacked out.

Eve knew the risk of walking away from a pissed off Villanelle, but she did it anyway. She was angry too. She couldn’t accept being manipulated, even more when she was manipulated to *kill* someone. She gave her plenty of opportunity to shoot her—*waited* for it as she walked

backwards, tears falling, for herself and for Villanelle. But shooting her on the back? Really? At least she had the guts to see Villanelle on the eye before she plunged the knife in her.

“You think I want to shoot her as a payback?”

“Unless you plan to hit her with a car,” Shaw says with serious contemplation. “You already stabbed her before.”

Eve hates it so much that Root and Shaw know everything about her. It’s a breach of privacy, very rude, so annoying. She can come up with more reasons, but deep inside she knows it’s all because she can’t just ignore and deflect like she usually does. She can’t kick them out of her current life either since she needs them.

She was mad, yes. If Villanelle was the one she saw when she first woke up, she would have strangled her with her IV line. It would reopen her wounds and she would bleed to death, but so did Villanelle, and that wasn’t so bad. However, after spending too much quiet time on her own and enjoying Root’s company, she realizes that she misses Villanelle more than she wants to hurt her. That probably says a lot about her psyche, Stockholm syndrome and all that.

Sighing, Eve says, “I’m not gonna hurt her.” She wanted to save her, she still does.

Shaw studies her for a moment before nodding. “Good. I can’t keep stealing blood from Manhattan General.” She puts the gun in the nightstand drawer then eyes the takeout bag with what others might call as lust. “Are you going to eat your dinner or can I have it?”

Just because Eve is feeling cheeky and a bit annoyed at Shaw, she snatches the bag and makes a show of stabbing a spring roll with chopsticks before shoving it into her mouth. She delights in Shaw’s scowl as she eats everything, like a hungry caterpillar catching up on delayed growth.

The next morning, Eve ambles out of the bedroom area and thinks she has been transported into another universe. Root and Villanelle are huddling together on the couch. Root has the shoulder of her blouse tugged down while Villanelle’s thumb is caressing the exposed skin. Eve would assume the painkiller as the cause of whatever she’s seeing, but the throbbing on her side is very real.

“What’s going on with those two?”

Eve hisses as she plops down on the chair next to Shaw on the dining table. Shaw is beyond exhausted. She left before midnight and came back after Root and Villanelle, sporting a cut on her cheek and a bruise peeking under her tank top. There are a bottle of whiskey and an empty glass on the table that Eve pulls to herself. It’s way too early to drink and she’s

supposed to be still on medication, but whatever. She pours three generous fingers and chugs it down, enjoying the burn in her throat.

Villanelle has lifted the hem of her shirt and Root is admiring her abs and they aren't really whispering so Eve catches *Oksana* and *Samantha* among the words and *what the fuck they are calling each other by their birth names now?*

"They are comparing scars," Shaw says without looking to the living room. "Don't be jealous."

"Why? Are you?" Eve bites back, defense mechanism up in full force.

Shaw stares at her then, as though she has a second head hidden in the mass of curls. "I'm a sociopath, I don't get that."

Eve feels the heat on her stomach, which can be from the sinking realization or the alcohol she consumed before eating anything. She has her suspicions. Unlike Villanelle who slips in and out of a role like changing shoes, Shaw has been unapologetically herself all the time. It's easy to put her in the spectrum after she cut her stomach, used her gloved fingers to widen the wound, and checked the damage inside without a single flinch.

You should never tell a psychopath they are a psychopath. It upsets them.

And yet here Eve is, sitting with a sociopath who is her current personal doctor who also used to be in the Marine Corps, judging from the tattoo on her arm, and most probably once a trained assassin for the government as well, and Shaw lay it down on her as it is. As if that one word sums up herself. Eve knows they were different, psychopath and sociopath, but they do share most of the traits and they seem to be everywhere nowadays.

"Is Root also..."

Eve leaves the question hanging. She can't help but wonder if the only way for this kind of relationship to work is if both parties were fucked up to some unhealthy degree. It sure happened with the murder husbands, she read all about them on tattlecrime. She didn't want to consider the possibility, but now that she has murdered someone with Villanelle's guidance, she thinks she should.

"She's a reformed killer-for-hire."

That has Eve slouching further into the chair. She toys with the bottle, but Shaw takes it back before she can pour herself another. Shaw considers telling her how shitty it is for her to invalidate Villanelle's feelings—because the one thing that Shaw is grateful of her mother, of Cole, the team, Gen, and especially Root, is that they treat her like she is feeling things like everyone else, even though she doesn't really feel any. They know to listen, to translate the things that she does for them into something they understand. Eve needs to listen more or what Villanelle has been trying to show her will forever be lost in translation.

Instead of elaborating and wasting her breath, Shaw says, "We're human too. Don't take that away." Then she leaves, bringing the half empty bottle with her.

Shaw makes her way to the pair in the living room. They are giggling like schoolgirls talking about their crushes and Shaw doesn't find it annoying. It's good that Root has a friend outside their little team and if Villanelle happened to be just as crazy as she is, that's a bonus. She says something to Villanelle that gets her looking at Eve, all for a few seconds before she's up on her feet and goes to her. Eve sits up straighter, winching in pain.

"Eve." There is softness to it, a contrast to the last time Villanelle yelled her name in a mix of anger and desperation. "Can we talk?" she asks.

Eve glances over Villanelle's side, where Shaw is still standing by the couch with a gun on her hand and Root is giving her an encouraging grin. There is no way out of this. "Sure," she says. Her feet are not as steady as her voice, but she holds on the edge of the dining table before her knees give out.

"Are you okay?"

No. "Yeah."

"Do you need help?"

"No, I'm fine." Eve dreads that Villanelle is simply copying Root. She knows for sure now that Root wasn't being friendly the first time they met, she was being Villanelle to gauge her reaction and she should have been angrier for being manipulated *again*, but she doesn't have the energy. "Let's talk outside." She wanders into the balcony, Villanelle following too close behind her.

The glass door to the balcony is kept open, the sheer curtain blowing along the wind. Eve and Villanelle are talking in shushed tone, standing closer than necessary while the wind carries their words apart. It's not a problem because Shaw has Eve bugged and The Machine accesses the bug Harold planted on that very balcony and is patching the feed to Root's cochlear implant.

Villanelle touches Eve's elbow but she gets shaken off and Shaw's finger twitches against the trigger of her gun.

Villanelle's *I was going to take you to Florence. I have a friend there. A good doctor. And psychiatrist. He'd give us free couple counseling*, fills their ears.

Eve huffs, unimpressed. "*You left me bleeding on the goddamn ruins.*"

"*To take the car!*"

"*You shot me!*"

"*You stabbed me first! We are even now.*"

"Think we should kneecap 'em?"

"Villanelle will like that," Root says. Shaw, whose body already filled with scars that none of them is from Root or matches Root's, thinks the romantic gesture is overrated. Root taps her

on the knee and stays her hand there. “They just need to use their words.”

Shaw groans in displeasure. “This lovers’ quarrel sucks.”

The last time they got this kind of numbers, they went to pick a couple of injured men off the eastern shore of Maryland. Shaw almost put a bullet in one of their heads and let the other die if not for The Machine’s, and thus Root’s, interference. Apparently Harold forgot to teach Her about the cannibals. The numbers were solved pretty quickly. Clean and dry clothes and medical assistance were all they required before going on their merry way to visit an old friend. Although the cannibal of the two was very taken with Root and has been sending her recipes through letters, Shaw would rather not know of their friendship. Eve and Villanelle’s case seems to require a lot more work, though.

They are still yelling at each other.

“Eve took the gun I left her.”

Root laughs, leaning closer to Shaw. “Villanelle stole my knife, and my card, that she used for shopping and buying a cabin in Anchorage.”

“They’ll get bored there.”

“Maybe we should get them a dog as housewarming gift,” Root says, then her grin widens. “And She said we’re going to meet old friends there.”

Shaw doesn’t want to know who *old friends* suppose to mean.

“*I’m sorry.*”

“*What?*”

“*For making you kill Raymond.*” Villanelle sounds bored, but herself. “*I should’ve killed him, but the opportunity is just too good to pass and I’m selfish. I want you all for myself.*”

Eve is quiet for a long moment. “*Did Root make you say that?*”

“*Not really.*”

All Root did is telling Villanelle the concept of free will and that people make their own choices, while they T-boned a bunch of drug dealers and set their car on fire and then later on, during a fun session with a sly politician and a hand drill. She didn’t understand why Eve was angry with her, but now she does and she’s willing to admit that she was wrong, just like she was willing to be honest in the stupid AA meeting because Eve told her that it was important. She wants to be good for her.

“*You’re still an asshole.*”

Villanelle doesn’t refute. She is okay with letting Eve has the last word this time. All that matters for her was that when she reaches out to touch Eve’s arm again, she doesn’t flinch

away. Root and Shaw watch on, Eve giving in and Villanelle grinning and there remains no gun or knife in sight as they get even closer.

“Mission accomplished?”

“Absolutely.”

End Notes

For a hot second I considered making Root and Villanelle hook up (one likes being choked, the other likes choking, plus the crazy amount of roleplaying and kinks? they are perfect for each other) but the idea of them being friends, sort of sisterly bond, is more fun to pursue. So this happened instead.

(Did anyone notice Hannibal being alluded a lot? I really should do one about Hannibal, Shaw, and Villanelle's odd friendship.)

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